

# Once again, a hotel comes to downtown Rosendale

## 1850 House to open in August

**Anne Pyburn**  
*BSP Reporter*

The smells of fresh paint and new-cut lumber are emanating from the venerable facade of the one-time Astoria Hotel in Rosendale, and owner Mike Ruger hopes that locals will catch a whiff of new hope on the breeze as he renovates the building into the 1850 House Inn and Tavern, turning a chunk of Rosendale history into a boost for Rosendale's future in the form of a boutique hotel.

"I've always wanted to have a hotel," he says. "I tried the restaurant business, in High Falls, and it wasn't really a good fit—but I don't need to do a restaurant here. I want to complement what exists, not compete with it."

Ruger's plans for the hostelry were formed by a visit to the American Hotel in Sag Harbor. "Their building is very much like ours, but they're not on the water," he says. "The owner gave me chapter and verse about how a good hotel can bring a town up."

"My vision is this: People don't even need to bring their cars. They can come up by train or bus— if they don't want to walk to the hotel we'll pick them up— and rent a bike down at Table Rock Tours. They've got the Bywater, the Rosendale Cafe, the

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Doorknobs and drumsticks. The 1850 House crew takes a break in the action from their hard day of work in providing the community a beautiful place to stay as part of the beautification of Rosendale process. The goal is for a soft opening proposed for mid August. Photo by Donna Cohn Viertel.

# 1850

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Red Brick, the Century House Museum, the theatre- I just saw a great live show there Saturday. There are some great shops. They can schedule a massage, or an acupuncture session- we'll help them locate whatever they'd enjoy."

In between sampling Rosendale's attractions and biking the Rail Trail, Ruger will welcome guests to an elegant retreat. Eleven rooms, including one two-bedroom suite, are being fitted out with wi-fi, queen-size or larger beds, flat screen TVs and mini-fridges just large enough, perhaps, for some Big Cheese specialties, farmer's market fruit, Twisted pretzels, and a bottle of Awosting White.

"Every room is a corner room, and every room has either river or mountain views," says Ruger proudly of the building. His Website, still under construction, features a series of pictures of the historic landmark and advertisements for it in a succession of incarnations through the ages of Rosendale. A thirty-foot deck being added to the rear of the building will capitalize on the creekside location. Leaded glass and brick will blend with wi-fi in the tavern, which will be open to locals; overnight guests will also have access to a large, cozy living room with a fireplace and the cozy "book nook" mini-library with a view of Joppenbergh Mountain. Guests who opt not to tote their own laptops can borrow an Ipad to noodle around on. Prices, he says, will be in line with those of other B&B operations in the region.

And the only meal served will be continental breakfast- part of a conscious choice on Ruger's part to get his patrons out and about into Rosendale and the surrounding area, a choice that has Ruger's project being embraced with open arms by the surrounding business community. "The more great stuff on the boulevard the

better," says Billy Liggan of John Liggan Insurance. Revitalizing a long dormant business should add nicely to the overall renaissance if it spills over like that."

"It should help things for people to have a place to stay right here and tour around," says Mark Morgenstern of the Rosendale Cafe, one of the nearest neighbors of the 1850 House. "Right now, the closest B&B is the Captain Schoonmaker. People can hike up the mountain- painters, birders, and mountain-bikers. This is a great walking town. You can walk Main Street or all the way from Stewart's to the mountain on the trail on the north side. If the DOT would just give us a serious bike lane on 213 and we could get the canal bank and the trestle available to walkers again, we'd really have something. We've been here 18 years and Rosendale always feels as though it's poised to be very successful, I don't think the success will ever be the strike it rich kind of thing- I think it's a steady upswell of ecotourism, where artists and blue collar people and professors and musicians can all continue to live and play together."

"It's going to bring people to Rosendale and we don't have a hotel- that works," says barber and pickle king Bill Brooks. "A good thing all around."

Two confirmed candidates for Rosendale's town board, Republican Robert Gallagher and Democrat F-Stop Minissali, also gave the project-in-progress high marks.

"I think it's a great idea," says Gallagher. "It makes sense and helps everybody, and there's a nice historic piece. I'm all in favor of that, of Williams Lake- basically of anything that will bring in bucks. Jobs."

"It looks like he's doing a great job," says Minissali. "It's a great idea, having an inn on Main Street, especially one that's bike-friendly. Hopefully, one day we'll see the Rail Trail passable from Kingston to Gardiner and over to the Walkway Across The Hudson. "

A glimpse of the overall concept can be found at [www.the1850house.com](http://www.the1850house.com). **ESP**